Presbytery POPISH, NOT EPISCOPACY.

By way of *Epistolary Discourse* to a Person of a misperswasion, leading *Presbytery* to the School of Repentance, rather then to continue in the seat of the scornful.

By *H. E.*

LONDON,

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To the

READER.

Courteous Reader,

Although the many Books which have been already printed in defence of Episcopacy, may seem not only to foreſtal the credit, but to evacuate the use of future Impreſſions, about the ſame ſubject; yet conſidering the meſſe of Confederate Brethren, who are ſworn to oppoſe it, which (being an Oglio of all Sects) is of far greater dimenſion then the defendant party. I preſumed it would not amount to the reckoning of a vanity to enter with my unkeen weapon into the ſame field: which (though unworthy to be muſtered with thoſe forces of wit, that fight for victory) may ſerve (like

the attendants of an Army) to face the enemy. It is the fate of truth for its naked ſimplicity to be as little known, as truſted, with earthly inhabitants: whereas errour, clothed with gloſing variety, finds not only acceptation, but maintenance in the hearts of moſt. What Gangrenes of Hereſies, and fretting ſores of ſchiſmatical opinions have infeſted the body of our National Church? ſince Biſhops (the miniſterial preſervers thereof in ſoundneſſe of Doctrine) were firſt divorced from their office, as the Hiſtory of former ages can yield no examples to parallel, ſo (being by Satans ſubtilty heightned to an exquiſite degree of wickedneſſe) the poſſible corruption of ſucceeding times, will want invention to excel. Such was the ſudden growth of greedy innovations in the black art of enmity, againſt their ancient guides, that experience hath proved them to be a true exception to the Philoſophers ſaying, *Nemo repente fit turpiſſimus.* And if their maſter, who raiſed them to the pinacle of preferment, had not thrown them down headlong by a timely temptation, they would have all turned conceited Monarchs, and not lookt over, but for the Kingdomes of the earth. It will be as much ſhame hereafter to report, as it is now grief to remem-

member the fiery generation of thoſe meteors of men, which (riſing by the fall of our great ſtars) have vapoured from the Regions both of pulpit and preſſe, into the houſes of the Honourable, and muſty Cottages of the baſeſt people, deluding them into ſuch a lamentable deviation from their right principles, that the greateſt part of them (like benighted Drunkards) are not yet able to finde the way home. The conſideration whereof doth offer us ſo much occaſion, to pity the dangerous eſtate of their diſeaſed ſouls, that I could wiſh no better ſucceſſe to attend this work, then that, by detecting the malignant diſtemper of their faults, it may become a direction for their recovery. But knowing that habituated Crimes will not readily yield to a ſeperation from the ſubjects that poſſeſſe them, and that cuſtome in ſin, (holding reaſon in bondage to the dominion of ſenſe) doth ſeldome nauſeate the ſinner to a deteſtation thereof. I am diſpoſed to doubt, that the event will be unanſwerable to the ſcope of my deſire. However the chiefeſt Part of this Book being written in time of perſecution, when Tyranny had ſtated the Tribes of all honeſt men in a fitter capacity of receiving wrongs then giving reaſons, I ſhall not now diſ-

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own the expoſing thereof to publick view, though it happen to make a fermentation of humours in the cholerick ſtomacks of our Engliſh Phariſees. For being ſet forth with the ſame intention wherewith it was firſt penned, more to declare my willingneſſe to approve, then ability of mind to defend the right of Epiſcopal Government. It may not be coujectured to be compoſed with confidence to confute thoſe that deny, but out of love to confirm them who believe the ſame.

To thee therefore, Gentle Reader, whoſoever thou art of this number, do I principally dedicate this my labour, wherein if thou apprehend nothing deſerving thy condemnation, but the truth of my affection to the welfare of the Church, it will be applauſe enough to ſatisfie the expectation of

Thy well-wiſhing friend,

HUGH EDMONDS.

THE CENSORS CENSURED.

AS in natural, ſo in bodies Politique, there are no diſtempers more ſmartly afflicting, than thoſe which invade the moſt noble parts, and amongſt the many cauſes, which work a ſolution of unity, in a civill conſtitution of government, the corrupt humours of a brain-ſick clergy are the moſt intrinſecal. The Truth whereof, though we have by the ſad experiences of our own paſt miſeries been better taught to bewail, than diſpute; yet being farther inſtructed by the preſent diſcovery of their propagated miſchiefs (notwithſtanding the bountiful rayes of mercy diffuſed amongſt them from our *Englands* Sun) we cannot but account it a pitiſull folly to commiſerate them, who think it a virtue to be cruel to themſelves; for they, whom neither the ſenſe of their own ſin, nor apprehension of the Kings pardon can reform, muſt needs be not onely the

worſt of ſubjects, but men. What lawful ground thoſe Aſſociates have had to ſhew themſelves ſo lately buſie with their tongue-pullies, to draw on a pack of Craftſmen into a Conſpiracie of hands, for the raiſing up of their Presbyterian *Diana*; and by the pionerie of their wits to undermine the foundation of the Kings Authoritie in ſpiritual affairs, coveteouſneſſe and pride muſt be the Advocates, (though ignorance be the chief witneſſe) in their plea, ſhould the Grandees of the Church (becauſe they are the Apoſtles Derivatives, betwixt Chriſt & whom there was no temporal jurisdiction interveuient) conclude for themſelves a priviledge of immunitie from the power of Kings in Eccleſiaſticalls; There might appear ſome reaſon in the face, though no truth in the bulk of the Argument; but for Petit Presbyters who are but under-graduates in ſpiritual juriſdiction, and, for the outſide of their calling, the Biſhops workmanſhip, for ſuch, I ſay, hoven up with a Timpanie of impudent ambition, to entitle themſelves to that, which their ſecond makers with humilitie diſown, even in the moſt Hierarchical order of the Clergie, can be no leſſe than an act of capital preſumption, and ſawcie irreverence, which hath not ſo much as the countenance of a rational plea to defend it. Amongſt the ſeven things which God hateth, pride is the ſin of the firſt Claſſis, *Pro.6.6.* & for its antiquitie of Lordſhip hath the preheminence, whereby only it cometh to paſſe (ſaith the ſame wiſdome) that man maketh contention; in exemplification whereof, I have newly obſerved ſome ſtiffe-necked factors of the Presbyterian merchandiſe ſo haughtily ſtubborn in their opinion, that they ſeem deſperately reſolved rather to break with their own errours, than bow to the truth, which others maintain, being now fuller of ſcornfull diſcontent in the eyes, then heretofore they have been of envious detraction in their mouths, as if (like the Sun) they were naturalized to look biggeſt,

biggeſt, when they are going down; and although our Gracious Sovereign, for his complacency and benevolence to all people, doth rightly compeer that Darling of mankind, *Qui neminem à ſe dimiſit triſtem*, and for his compaſſion and charitie is not inferiour to the *Scottiſh* Monarch, who was therefore ſtiled the poor mans King: yet the tyrannie of theſe mens arrogant ſpirits, will not allow them to pray for this incomparable perſon by his determinate name, but to preſent him to heaven in a driblet of words, under the notion only of *Individuum ex hypotheſi*, as if *Charles* the Second, were to them a *Shibboleth*, which they could no more plainly pronounce han obey. It may well therefore be wiſhed, that his Sacred Majeſtie would in Juſtice (which is the root of mercie) be pleaſed to doe to the inſolent Presbyters, what once the good *Theodoſius* ſaid to a contentious Prelate, *Si tu pacem fugis, ego te ab Eccleſia fugere mando*, which would be a readie means to prevent ſuch Church Moths from fretting out the beauty of that garment, wherein they are bred, and to extinguiſh the generation of Diotrephan Tribes, who (like inteſtine worms, maintained by the hoſpitality of the ſtomack) out of a greedie appetite to higher fare, than their Ordinary can afford them, will at laſt deſtroy the very body that gave them being. But that their mouths may not be fully ſtopt, before they have ſpoken the utmoſt for themſelves, I ſhall do them that right to declare what I have learned from ſome of their ſtars of the firſt magnitude, by whoſe influence of wit the leſſer lights are ſupplied with this ſubtile diſtinction, which indeed is but an excuſe as blameable as the fault, we are, ſay they, ſubject to Kings *circa ſacra*, but not *in ſacris*, whereby they falſly ſuppoſe themſelves in their miniſterial Robes, ſo abſolutely impropriate to God, that no man can have a Relative intereſt in them, and, within the pale of the pulpit, to be ſuch a peculiar incloſure from the Com-

mons of the Nation, that they are not base enough for subjection to the high way of the Kings Government, as if their spiritual incumbencie were a decreed exception to the Apostles *Rom.* 13. 1. *Omnis anima*, and their ordination to teach supream Magistrates an injunction not to obey him. Surely *Hilkiah* (a better man than a Presbyter) was not of their mind nor manners, in his religious behaviour towards his Sovereign, who (though conscious of the Kings youthfull age, more apparently fit to execute the advice, then to command the service of a high Priest) did not take it upon himself to reform the abuses of the Church, but waited for better authority then his own to legitimate the work, and (which is highly observable) having found the book of the Law, which seemed a proper instrument as well for the Priests custody as use, 2 *Kin.* 22. he thought it his duty to deliver it to the King, both to be kept and read. To make a solemn Covenant with God, is *agere in sacris*, a matter that concerns not the skirts, but the very bowels of Divinity; yet this did *Josuah*, *Jos.* 24. (who was neither Priest nor Prophet) by his kingly authoritie, engaging all the people in subiection thereunto. *Moses*, though not in office, was yet in act, a Priest by consecrating *Aaron*, whence it is more then probable, that Kings by their unction, are endued with a higher capacity to deal in holy things, than our classical Authors will allow them to be, whose power bearing date immediately from the court of Heaven, makes both their persons sacred, and their names divine, whereby they are not only truly, but solely qualified for Gods Deputation, and so being next to the most High, can neither have superiours nor equals upon earth within their Dominions, they are *Christi Domini*, the Lords own anointed, which denomination was never given to Priest or Prophet, but (as a learned Bishop hath observed) in 33. places of Scripture (where it may be found)

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is alwayes ſpoken either of Chriſt or *Kings*. It muſt needs be then the diſeaſe of a loyal heart to remember how ingeniouſly miſchievous ſome Rebels have been heretofore in maintaining the *Kings* authority, either coordinate or ſubordinate to the power of Parliaments, and what uſe hath been ſince made of thar Helliſh Tenent not only for ſequeſtration, but ſubverſion of mens eſtates, will be eaſier for our poſterity to condemn, than for us to forget. Should our Sovereign Lord the *King* have been longer deprived of his iuſt right, in diſtributing Iuſtice either by rewarding the vertues, or puniſhing the vices both of Eccleſiaſticall and Civill perſons, Gods complaint of Iſrael might be *Englands* proverbial ſongs; like people, like Prieſts, the people would feel the bite of the Prieſts teeth, the Prieſts the venome of the peoples tongues, and both the ſmart of divine judgement, *Ezekiels* foxes would degenerate into *Iſaiahs* dogs, thoſe, who did craftily watch, would greedily eat up the ſins of the people, and attend their flocks, as the *Caperhaites* did Chriſt, to feed their own bellies, and to be clothed with the wool of the ſheep, rather than with the Righteouſneſſe of the great Shepherd. But bleſſed be the name of the Lord, who hath ſet the Crown on his Majeſties head with his own hands, without the vain concurrence of fleſhly arms, whereby he hath revealed, *per me Reges*, to be not only his word but his deed, not permitting the act, but approving the Right of his Reign, which in Truth ſhould be as well a terrour as conviction to the conſciences of thoſe who have ſtampt it in ſome peoples brains for doctrine as currant as their Creed, that Monarchical government is but a more noble kind of Tyranny, which hath exiſtence only by Gods connivance, and is rather the rod of his wrath to puniſh, than the ſtaffe of his love, to ſupport a Nation. Truly, where there is a brimfulneſſe of envious reſolution to oppoſe the beſt, there can be no room for

charity, which ſubmitteth to the worſt of Governours, and it may be juſtly feared, that no true concordance will inhabit the centre, whileſt ſuch Heteroclites are left to lurk in the circumference of the Church, who will rather profeſſe themſelves St. *Peters* animals by ſtanding out in their own conceit, than St. *Pauls* ſouls in ſtooping to the authority of their lawful ſuperiours, neither can they be well thought fit Truſtees for the ſecuritie of the Goſpels treaſure, who having once ſhipwrackt their Allegiance to the King, are ſtill bankrupt of faith and honeſty. Thoſe are the old ſtocks, whereupon Satan hath graffed the variety of Sects, which hath been the ſhame, and is yet the grief of *Englands* Church, whoſe firſt non conformity to Canonical orders, hath been the very originals, whereunto the many copies of obſtinate Fanaticks, that are now extant, have their true reference, who following the tracts of St. *Judes* murmurers, in admiration of ſome mens perſons for advantage ſake, do diſſociate themſelves from the community of Saints, not only in opinion, but practiſe, than which nothing can be more deſtructive to the concord and peaceable unanimity of ſpiritual Congregations; for as in phyſical Compoſitums, a violent diſunion of Integrable parts breeds a more dangerous ſhiſme in the body, than a humerous diſtemper; ſo in Eccleſiaſtical corporations, an actual ſeperation from the Catholick fellowſhip of beleevers in Gods ſervice is a greater pandor to confuſion, than the ſcandal of a ſpeculative diſtraction. It is time therefore for our Seminary Presbyters, who have been the Protoplaſtiques of a Rebellious generation, both in Church and State, to make a confeſſion of their paſt faults, as well as their preſent faith to the King. They are now ſufficiently read in the book of their own conſciences to know, *nemo periculoſius peccat, quam qui peccata defendit*, to Apologize for ſin is more damnable, than to act it, and not to retract inexcuſable errours,

errours, doth as much unqualifie a delinquent for mercy, as the perpetration thereof can adapt him to justice. Repentance, though it may be too soon ended, can never bee too late begun; he, that lives like St. *Lukes* judge on the bench, neither fearing God, nor regarding man, may have the grace to die like the *Jewes* theef on the Crosse, with profession of both; for that power which expresly denyeth forgivenesse to one sin onely, doth implicitely conceede a possibility of pardon to all others. On this consideration it would be worth their paines to translate their Petition for Presbytery into a Suit for Indempnity, and publickly to acknowledge his Majesties Declaration which is the proof of his grace, to be an argument of their guilt, who (like cunning fencers, that aim at the legs, when they intend to veny the pate) under a reformative pretence of destroying those ravenous beasts, which worry the people, begg'd leave of their master to hunt the kingdome, which being granted, they took liberty of themselves to make him their chief game: for it is well known from *Dan* to *Beersheba*, that the credit of their false doctrine was the very leaven wherewith the people were first moulded into a sowre lump of armed malice against their Sovereigne.

And I may truly say, it was the unlucky Bontefen, which not only yielded smoak to smother all Treaties into a nullity of successe, but that gave light also to clear the way for more active instruments then themselves to take off the Head of our eternally renowned Saint *Charles*, together with the Government from his shoulders; for although they entred not the Stage with those miscreants that personated *Pilate* in the fifth Act; yet because they appeared with others who playd the parts of *Annas* and *Caiphas*, in the first Scene of the Tragedy, we may justly christen them the Grandfathers in law of that bloudy fact, which being unmatchable in humane

mane ſtories, may be in ſome ſort compared to the crafty complement of the cruel wolfe in the fable, who told the ſheep, *Da mihi potum, & ego mihi dabo cibum*, meaning to eat him up for his courteſie. A fact, which as former ages have not been ſo learnedly wicked to invent, ſo I hope the future will be more honeſtly wiſe than to imitate; A fact, which may ſchoole our Kings of *England* into a uſe of the *Italians* prayer, to be delivered from their friends whom they truſt, as well as from their enemies whom they fear, and inform the people with the *Spaniards* ſoul, rather to ſheath their ſwords in one anothers bowels upon private quarrels, than to draw them againſt their Sovereign in open war.

But, if the Recognition of ſuch an execrable murder be not caution enough for ſubjects to reſtrain them from Rebellion, let the memorable example of the *Amalekites* puniſhment be their exhortation to obedience, 2 *Sam.* 1. 13, 14. who (though a ſtranger to *Sauls* kingdome, and by them requeſted to conclude his pain with the inference of death) was by *Davids* command for touching the Lords anointed, inſtantly condemned to looſe his life.

If Kings lives then are ſo precious in Gods account, that they may not be touched in the heat of proclaimd hoſtility, what a curſed ſin muſt that be, which juſtifieth thoſe who take them away in cold bloud?

By theſe animadverſions I hope the whole hoſt of ſpirituall officers, who have fought againſt the Regiment of the Church, will be victoriouſly fens'd into a unanimous Iudgement, that it is far better for them to have the Apoſtles doctrine in their hearts, then the *Scots* diſcipline in their hands, to be content with that eſtate wherein they have been, then to covet that wherein they ought not to be, to ſubmit to the King in cauſes Eccleſiaſtical, rather then by calling his power in queſtion, to abuſe

abuse their own authority in the Gospel, to give *Cæsar* his, will be no substraction from their due, had not our Saviour paid for himself and *Peter*, it might be doubted, whether the Clerks of this age (like the old *Egyptian* Priests) would not plead their estates untributary, as well as their offices unsubject to the King.

With what tenure of spiritual power they are invested *Jure divino*, none but those Laicks whom the Popes Mandate hath screen'd from the Sun-shine of Gods word, can be ignorant.

The officious Acts of *Jehoiada* to *Jehoash*, and *Nathan* to *David*, are not only presidents to warrant the right, but boundaries to limit the extent of their claim; they must instruct Kings as the one, and may reprove them as the other did, which was not executed by an excommunicative scourge to make *David* do pennance for his offence, but with the monition of a meek spirit, to give him a penitent sense thereof; for as the act of reproof argued the King to be Gods subject: so the mode of reproving maintain'd him to be the Prophets Sovereign.

And thus I believe *Azariah* withstood *Vzziah* by no other force, save that of the tongue, whose aim was to strike at the fact, not the person of the King; to induce him into a consciousnesse of his fault, not to require his submission to punishment, which, because immediately inflicted of God, supposeth him privileg'd not to receive it from man: so that *rebus sic stantibus*, our ministerial Guides have little reason, and lesse grace to pride themselves in their Ghostly authority of rebuking Kings, since such verbal Reprehensions being no more then religious servants (not adventuring beyond the sphear of their calling) may lawfully practise towards their

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ungodly masters; for as it is the Resolve of Divines, that in case of necessity *Quil. bet Christianus est sacerdos*, so it is not only the liberty, but the duty of every one in Gods case boldly to reprove an offending brother, as I think my self bound to tell the associated brethren, that they have highly wronged the Majesty of God & the King, both by their orall and manual prolusions to introduce a new fangled government in the Church, & that it will be more safe for them to observe the duty of looking into their own, then the false commission of overseeing their superiours actions, the performance whereof might happily make that saying *ex culpa sacerdotum ruina populi*, to be as well known to themselves, as felt by others, and convert the hypocrisie, which some do, into the sincerity of obedience, which all should professe; for though none of them be puritanized into Donatisme, but can protest it their necessary obligation to reverence the Kings person, yet most are so far sublimated from the droste of superstition, that they cannot without defiling their consciences vaile to the train of his ceremonious Titles, they can easily concoct supream Governours, dryly swallowed, but with the sawce of Ecclesiastical causes it quite nauseates their stomacks, and the name of head is more offensive to their palates, then perfumes are to the nostrils of those that are grieved with an Histerical passion; a monstrous straw for such mighty men to stumble at, which may be put in the same ballance with that of their schismatical Predecessours in the conference at *Hampton Court*, who were scandalized with the word absolution in the *Liturgy*, but well content with the Term *Remission of sins*.

What difference there is betwixt supream Governour and Head in a notional acception, is more fit for Grammatical Cri-

Criticks, then politick Christians to inquire, as they are complicated in one subject, and determined to a constant oneneſſe both of action and end, they muſt by the rules of honeſty as well as Art, be conſtrued Synonymous, and in a promiſcuous manner adjudged to contract their literal variety into an identity of ſenſe.

Indeed we cannot deny but the Title of ſupream Head was firſt given to King *Henry* the Eight by the Pope, who being by his own inſtitution in the world (as the ſoul is in the body by Gods Creation) *Totus in toto*, and not onely *ſingulis*, but *univerſis major*, cannot be ſuppoſed to part with a piece of himſelf but for his own ends; yet we conceive it no treſpaſſe againſt any Canon, either of Scripture or reaſon, to convert that to a good uſe, which was firſt beſtowed to an ill purpoſe; but for Presbyters to take that away for the better eſteem of their own authority, which was given by the Pope, to diſgrace the Kings jurisdiction in the Church, is no leſſe unreaſonable to deviſe, then irreligious to practiſe.

That great Bulwark of objection, (Chriſt is the ſole Head of the Church, *ergo* no other can have the Title) which hath been preſumed too ſtrong for an army of Schoolmen to beat down, muſt neceſſarily yield upon terms to our ſide. For although as the Church is internally conſidered in reſpect of the kingdome of Grace, and our Saviour Chriſt as Lord thereof, by right of Redemption, ruling the hearts of the faithful by his ſpirit, there is no ſubjection allowable, nor headſhip to be attributed but to him only; yet as he is King by right of Creation, loving an Imperial Sovereignty over all his creatures, and the Church in a militant condition, which (by reaſon of an inſeperable commixture of good

and bad, and common relation of the inward and outward man doth necessarily require an external policy to maintain a uniformity and order in the worship of God, so he hath ordained his Vicegerent on earth to whom both Clergy and Laity must be subject.

And in this qualification of sense Kings may be truly stiled supream Heads in causes Ecclesiastical, within their Dominions; Thus *Samuel* called *Saul* the Head of the Tribes of Israel, 1 *Sam.* 15. 17. which *in eodem signo rationis* doth imply all persons, as well Ecclesiastical as civil in that Commonwealth, to be his subordinate members. And that the Priests were subject in their very Offices to the supreame power of their magistrates, 2 *Chron.* 8. *Solomons* Acts in ordering their courses, and appointing the *Levites* to their charges, (who in manifestation of their duty are said not to depart from the commandement of the King) do sufficiently evidence, whose authority likewise to punish sins of the first table, that refer to Religion as well as those of the second, which belong to humane society.

Gods own prescript Laws to *Moses*, *Deut.* 13. *Deut.* 17. *Levit.* 17. are the authentique seals to confirm, whereunto we may annex that fact of our Saviour Christ himself, chastising the *Jewish* Pedlers, by vertue of his divine Royalty, for profanation of the Temple, as an exemplary proof beyond all exception.

Having pickt out the pith of their Divinity in the former objection, there resteth one hard Argument more to break, wherein lies the marrow of their Logick, if the power, say they, in Ecclesiastical matters be proper to the supream magistrate as a Mastistrate, then it should belong to all magistrates, and consequently to the heathen: the definition of

a magiſtrate being one in Chriſtian and Heathen Princes; but this would be both ſinful and ridiculous to aſſert, *ergo* that cannot lawfully be maintained.

Truly this is a witty ſophiſme, which deſerves the Reply of an ingenious Reſpondent in the Philoſophers School, *falſe profecto, ſed falſo quidem.* I preſume the ſame learning which qualified them to oppoſe others, may enable them to anſwer themſelves in this point; for if their conſequence be good, *Baals* Prieſts had as much right to the ſervice of the Temple, as the *Levitical* Clergy-men, neither can our Proteſtant miniſters have a better Title to the diſpenſation of Chriſts ordinances, then the officers of the *Romiſh* Church do now claim.

Therefore if they will honeſtly defend their own as we do the Kings authority in the Church, they muſt acknowledge their argument to be contrary to the principles of art, as their opinion is to the precepts of Religion; for when a Reſtrictive Term is adjoyned to an equivocal ſubject (as magiſtrate is) To argue from an indefinite to a univerſall, is an illegal conſequence, the reaſon is, becauſe what is attributed by ſuch a note of limitation, is not an abſolute but a comparate propriety, which doth *convenire ſubjecto mediante alio*, as the power of the King in cauſes Eccleſiaſtical is not proper to him, ſimply *ſecundum naturam*; but Relatively as he is a true Chriſtian Magiſtrate; according to which univocation, if their Argument had been formed, the conſequence would be logically true.

But as we do appropriate this power onely to Kings truly Chriſtian, So I muſt acquaint them that the Heathen ſubjects had ſuch a Reverend reſpect to the authority of the ſupream magiſtrate in matters of their idolatrous Religion, that *Ariſtotle*

Arist. Polit. l. 3. could say Βασιλεὺς ἢ περὶ τὰ θεῖα ἀρχή. The King is Lord and Ruler of things that pertain to the Gods.

To conclude, I wish those men, who (like the first matter have an indifferency to all forms, and are so unfixedly disposed in Religion, that they can be content with the *Sichemites*, to be circumcised for their advantage, would (not for wrath but for conscience sake) give a seasonable Testimony of their obedience by a willing conformity to the Kings power in Ecclesiastical causes, that the Church may be no longer grieved with the rapine of forreign wolves, or spoil of domestick foxes, but that sound doctrine may flourish within her gates, and true discipline be established in her borders, to which end the Lord send us a speedy Restauration of our ancient Government by the hands of *Zerubbabel* and *Joshua*, the King and the Bishop, that as we are baptized in one faith, so we may be subject to one Rule, & as we are of one body, we may be all of one mind, to worship God both in the purity and beauty of holinesse, and to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. *Amen.*

FINIS.

THE AUTHORS LETTER TO AN Anti-Epiſcopall MINISTER Concerning the GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH.

Quæ potes, excuſa, nec Amici diſcere cauſam,
Quo pede cæpiſti, ſic bene ſemper eas. Ovid.

Written *Anno Domini* 1651.

LONDON,
Printed for *Philemon Stephens* the younger at the *Kings Arms* over againſt the *Middle Temple Gate*. 1661.

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SIR,

ALthough it be a task above the greateſt experiment of Nature, to ſtop the open ſepulchres of other mens mouths; yet to vindicate a mans own name from the unjuſt imputations of ſcandalous aſperſions, is a duty compatible with the leaſt vigour of grace.

It is well known to the meſſenger who brought me your challenge, how unwilling I was at firſt to open my *Cephalique* vein in thoſe *Canicular* daies, wherein Remedies ſtrongly applyed, are more dangerous then diſeaſes, and moſt men by a malignant conſtellation, unluckily complexion'd to diſlike what they cannot correct, but receiving a ſecond information of your *Goliah* ſpirit, daring the whole Iſrael of our ſide to a Goſe-quil-fight, after a ſerious debate betwixt my underſtanding and will, I reſolved at laſt, rather to expoſe my ſelf to the hazardous cenſure of ſome for a diſpenſible forwardneſſe, then neceſſarily to incur the blame of others, and my own conſcience, for an inexcuſable cowardiſe in Religion.

Thanks be to God, I do not only believe as a Chriſtian, but as a ſcholler underſtand the divine right of Church-Go-

vernment, which in its substantials, by the consent of most men on all sides, is not ambulatory (like a moveable Tent) to be set up, and put down, at the pleasure either of civil or Ecclesiastical power, but (like the *Persian* Law) unalterable, both in respect of persons, and time; but whether the administration of this decreed Government, be by divine commission originally granted, either to a Presbyterian, Independent, or Episcopal ministry, *sub Judice lis est*: in which processe (dismissing the sceptique enquiries of humane Authors, as writs insufficient to determine controversie) we must appeal to the word of God for our *quietus est*.

The Consistorian Presbytery, which for a while (like *Senacheribs* Letter) insulted over Kings, people, hath always been as great a stranger to my study, as to my faith; for I could never think that the extemporary invention of a necessitous condition, would ever become an object of speculation, much lesse of practise, to the Church of *England*. The Arguments which are chiefly urged to maintain the credit of this society upon a divine score, are altogether unsatisfactory to my conscience, not so much because they do in a singular construction, run counter to the Catholique sentence of the Church in former ages, as in that they offer violence to the natural sense of the word, which is the best Interpreter of it self; for I would gladly be informed by you, or any man of your constitution, who (like *Diogenes*, an *Epicure* by conversation, but a *Stoick* in opinion) can seem an Independent in face, yet be a Presbyterian in heart, why, or how the Term Ruler, which in all places of Scripture, touching spiritual matters, is the essential predicate of a Pastour, should or can be understood of a Lay Elder, especially since the original word used by St. *Paul, in Genere*, *Rom.* 12. 8.

12. 8. is by the ſame Apoſtle 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 12. directly given to the Paſtour *in ſpecie.*

I would likewiſe willingly know by what myſtery of Art you can prove the Teacher, Exhorter, and Ruler to be diſtinct kinds of officers, the Acts of Teaching, Exhorting, and Ruling, 1 *Tim.* 3. 2 *Tim.* 4. *Heb.* 13. 17. being in ſeveral and plainly intelligible Text letters, jointly appropriated to one and the ſame ſubject: or with what confidence you can compoſe your ſelf to reſolve the queſtion, whether the Teacher be above the Exhortor, or the Exhortor above the Teacher, in their diſtinct offices, *utrumque non vacat abſurdo*; for if the Teacher be above the Exhortor, then the Teacher may exhort, but the Exhortor not teach, and ſo *è converſo*, the reaſon is, becauſe the greater may doe, what the leſſe can, but the leſſe cannot, what the greater doth, as the Teacher and Exhortor may govern as well as the Ruler, but the Ruler cannot teach nor exhort as well as they, according to the claſſical Commentators own opinion. Therefore (unleſſe there be an *Algebra* in Divinity to invent the ſecret of a numeral diverſity without a difference) this incomprehenſible new diſtinction of Eccleſiaſtical functions muſt needs be ſuch a grand *Aſyſtaton* to the word of God, as he that is but an *ABCdarian* in Scripture, may eaſily ſpell at the firſt ſight.

And here I cannot ſufficiently wonder at the deliberate, and *cum privilegio* errour of our Synodical Presbyters, who ſo hotly urge the inſeperability of the keys againſt their Independent brethren, to lock up the peoples mouths from gaping after the power of Eccleſiaſtical Jurisdiction, and yet allow thoſe amongſt themſelves to judge in the Conſiſtory, whom they

Vid. jus divinum in Regim. Eccleſ.

forbid to preach in the Pulpit. Certainly, if the reason be forcible enough to bar the Independent multitude, it must of necessity be equally effectual to exclude the Presbyterian singularity, from the management of spiritual commissions, the propriety of a thing being as incommunicable to one, as to many of a different kind, for the use of Reason is as incompatible with the nature of a particular, as of a universal beast-hood.

Baalams Asse by a natural constitution had no more priviledge to speak, then the whole family of that sex, neither hath a Triumvirate of Laymen better authority to rule in the Church, then a century of the same lineage.

Away then with *solum non solus præst*, a fresh distinction, which smells of as much untruth as novelty, calculated for the meridian rather of a Utopian Commonwealth, then an *English* Church. Can a real division stand with an absolute inseperability of the keys: hath God joyned them together in his word, and must they now be divorced by humane inventions? *ubi scriptura non distinguit, nec nos distinguere debemus*, was alwayes held a sound Canon in the doctrinal body of Theology, till the Popes head by the destructive machination of an *Index expurgatorius*, broke off the neck of the Rule.

What a sinful shame is it for our reforming prophets, (who claim the reputation of Gospel Edifiers) to go about to build up *Jerusalem* with the Rubbish of *Babylon*? and to dawb over the wall of Christian Religion, with the untempered mortar of Jesuitical distinctions. Christ gave the keys to his Disciples, as preaching ministers of the word, and powerful dispensers of his Sacraments; therefore such as they are the sole Proprietaries of that Authority, for *quatenus*

tenus ipſum includit per ſe. How then can this new thing called Lay-Elder be rightly ſaid to rule only? who hath no right to rule at all: ſurely *dabo tibi claves regni cœlorum* was not ſpoken to a mixt perſon, comprehending Clergy and Laity, (St *Peter* was no ſuch Hermaphrodite) but to a Homogeneal root, virtually containing a univocal generation of miniſterial branches, to be ſpread over the whole world, for defence of the Catholique Church. Oh take heed therefore how you corrupt ſound Texts with adulterate gloſſes, or advance a *Geneva* Tranſlation above Gods original, let not the biaſſe of novel opinions turn your heart from the way of Truth, (it being far better to halt in the right path then to run headlong into a wrong) but ſeriouſly conſider whether it be not ſafer to maintain a Church-warden by Eccleſiaſtical policy, then a Lay Elder by divine right? As for the preciſe Independency, which is now the predominant humour in the diſtemper'd body of this Commonwealth; I conceive it to be falſly grounded, either on precepts not truly underſtood, or examples not commonly practiſed: by the one, that is, erroneouſly attributed to the people, which is directly intended to Church Officers, as *Matth.* 18. 17. and from the other, that, which for the promulgation of the Goſpel in the blooming of the Church, was diſpenſed to ſome ſpecial perſons by an extraordinary inſtinct of the holy Ghoſt, as *Acts* 11. 19, 20. is drawn into a common and ordinary uſe for all ſorts of men in theſe dayes.

From the firſt particular we have a ready weapon to beat down the ſtrong imagination of ſome vulgar inquiſitors, who report the opinative enmity betwixt the Presbyterian and Independent to be an irreconcileable oppoſition, as if

the one were a *Jew*, and the other an *Egyptian*: a bold errour, worthy to be put out of countenance in the ſtocks of correction; for although thoſe yeomen in Religion, hold not together *in capite*, yet they are joint-tenants in tail, and (like the monumental foxes) are bound by agreement to find firebrands for the combuſtion of the Church.

The only variance amongſt them is, either in the Arithmetical account of ſin, as *Mary Magdelen*, who was poſſeſſed with ſeven devils, differ'd from the *Gadarene* that had the company of a legion, or in the temporal computation of their original, as *Cain*, the firſt murtherer, was diſtinguiſht from *Judas* the greateſt Traytor in the world.

In which reſpect (though ſome, miſtaken in the ſcience of Eccleſiaſtical Heraldry, have given Presbyterians the honour to be of the elder Houſe) the *I*ndependents, without ſuſpicion of Phariſaiſme may at a feſtival dinner, challenge the uppermoſt place as their due, by an unqueſtionable right of preheminence from their ancient Progenitors, for (unleſſe *Aarons Levites* ſuperannuated, did degenerate into Lay Elders, or the Aſſemblie in the caſe of that runaway Concubine, kill with over-leacherous kindneſſe, were a type of a *Geneva* Conſiſtory) *I* cannot apprehend the leaſt advantage either of a right line in ſenſe, or collateral in conſequence, to deduce the Genealogy of a Presbyterian (in the laſt Edition) through the whole age of the old Teſtament, whereas the *I*ndependents pedigree, is notoriouſly known to be derived from the Congregational confederates of *Korah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, famous upon Record in the very infancy of the Law.

But paſſing from their Prerogative to their preſumption, give me leave in a juſt exprobration to deride the confidence of

of this forward generation, who (ere they have learned with the *Ethiopian* Eunuch to underſtand the Scriptures) will undertake to diſpute in the ſchoole of *Tyrannus*, and (as if they were of the houſe of *Stephanus*) be their own ordainers to ſave others, before they know (like St. *Pauls* Jailor) what they muſt doe to be ſaved themſelves.

For who but a fools wiſe man will believe, that *Davids* eating the ſhew bread, was a Catholique licence for every hunger-ſtarved Iſraelite, or *Epicure Jew* to make it his ordinary meals meat.

Neceſſity, that great School-miſtreſſe of Arts, (though it hath no law by proverb) is not lawleſſe by Providence, neither was it ever decreed by the policy of heaven, that any man(though he owneth the condition of the unjuſt Steward, without art of husbandry to dig, and boldneſſe to beg) ſhould relieve the want of his teeth by an injuſtifiable trade of the tongue.

It ſeems a merry ſpectacle to behold a ſerpentine mechanick, who like a pictur'd head, hath much art, but no ſenſe, to vault from a Tub into a Pulpit: but it is a ſad hiſtory indeed to hear him with the ſtrings of his tongue, lead a troop of ſilly evites by the eares, out of the garden of Paradiſe, into the wilderneſſe of hell, by fooling them into a fanatick fancy, that they may be wiſer, then God by creation faſhioned them to be, nor can the innocency or uprightneſſe of mens intentions excuſe the obliquity of their actions, no more then the *Bethſhemites* harmleſſe curioſity in looking into the Ark, or *Vzza's* conceited courteſy in touching it, could priviledge them from the puniſhment of death. A handſome pair of *Judaical* preſidents to damn the practiſe of thoſe men, who are either overbuſie in prying into Gods ſecret

ſecret counſel, or too preſumptious in handling his revealed will.

It was not loſſe of limb, but of life, for any one (except *Aaron* and his ſons) to wait on the Prieſthood in the old Church, and if God were ſo careful by a penal ſtatute of death, to provide a uniformity of conſecrated officers to attend on his Altar under the Law, why ſhould we ſo much undervalue the Majeſty of our Saviour Chriſt, and his *Economical* providence over the houſhold of faith, as to think that he hath allowed his own table to be ſerved with a Gallamalfry of miniſters under the Goſpel; or that he doth approve an unpoliſhed rabble of lame and blind Laicks, to ſet themſelves up as pillars and lights in the Chriſtian Church, ſince thoſe even amongſt the Clergy, who had but the leaſt blemiſh of corporal deformities were forbidden to officiate in the *Jewiſh* Sanctuary.

The offering up of incenſe was an acceptable ſervice, as well to procure the bleſſing of Gods love, as to prevent the curſe of his anger, yet being unlawfully done, by hands not ordained to the performance of the duty, it became an impulſive cauſe of ſevere vengeance, the Preface only of which miſdemeanour expoſed *Vzziah* (Royalty having no ward againſt the ſtroak of divine Juſtice) to the grievous penance of a durable diſeaſe; and if it were the juſt merit of a *King* to be marked in the forehead, for committing but a demirape on the Prieſts office, what ſhould Minimes of men deſerve to ſuffer, who in a full career of ſinfull ambition, purſue the honour of a higher calling, then God hath made them either capable to overtake, or skilful to undergo.

Verily the Camels doom in the fable, who for deſiring the Bulls horns, loſt his own eares, is a penalty too modeſt for

for ſuch Mountebank adventurers. Doth not the Scripture witneſſe, that Chriſt put ſome Teachers in the Church, to teach us that no man ſhould preſume to put himſelf, and but ſome, to aſſure us, that all cannot be put in the ſame office, and is not his ſhort plea in the Brethrens caſe a ſignal declaration to the whole world, that as he, being dedicated to a ſpiritual imployment, would not intangle himſelf with civil matters: ſo no man that is conſtitu'ed in a civil vocation, ſhould be bold to meddle with ſpiritual affairs.

Truly, if the coming into *Moſes* chair without *Aarons* call, doth not ſignify a climbing up the wrong way, I am yet to learn the meaning of entring in at the right door, or if a ſelf-will'd invading of the miniſterial function be not to run in Gods errand without ſending, I know not what it can be to go with a Commiſſion; I heartily wiſh thoſe watchfull Seers, who are ſo clear-ſighted in eſpying the motes of others, had the illumination of true grace to diſcern the beams of their own errours; for I muſt roundly tell them, if St. *Pauls* check to the pragmatical *Theſſalonians*, cannot humble them into a continence of themſelves within the term of their own buſineſſe, St. *Peters* cenſure will juſtly exalt them into the fellowſhip of murderers and thieves.

Neither can I omit to pay the tribute of the like charitable affection to the deſperate fraternity of their next kindred by bloud, whoſe brains, overwhelm'd with the vapours of an Anabaptiſtical feaver, diſpoſe them to dream of a ubiquitarie coordination of men, which to thoſe who are throughly awakened into the liberty of their ſenſes, is all one with an exact confuſion of States; for order (without uſing the rack of an abuſive Trope to make it ſpeak more

truth then it literally intends) is nothing else but the Stewardſhip of nature, maintained by a gradual proceſſion, as well of one above another in place, as after another in time; therefore it can be no leſſe then an abnegation of our Creatorſhip, and a rebellious outlawing of our ſelves from divine protection, to ſeek that on earth, which is not to be found in Heaven, ſave in God only, whoſe individual identity of eſſence is the only exception againſt irregularity of perſons. All other creatures (though of the ſame kind, as men and Angels) by reaſon of their numerical difference in nature, being ſuſceptible of degrees in accidentall qualifications: and how ſuitable this phyſical obſervation is to religious doctrine St. *Pauls* brief injunction in words; Let every ſoul be ſubject, is a large lecture of confirmation in effect; which univerſal precept not only includeth the world of liberal and mechanick Artiſts, but likewiſe the whole tribe of Eccleſiaſtical officers, neither can that ſophiſtical ſubterfuge (the quinteſſence of Presbyterian Tyranny) that Church-men are ſubject to Kings in their perſons, but not in their office, free them from the compleat duty of the Text, but is rather an aggravation of their untowardneſſe to obedience for ſuch Legierdemain (like that Apologetical diſtinction which the *Romaniſts* invented for *Julius* the Third, that he was a good Pope, but a bad man.) though it may dilude a child of *Nineveh* that knows not the right hand from the left, cannot dazle the eyes of intelligent perſons from a ſenſible diſcovery of the impoſture, becauſe miniſters, *quatenus* miniſters, and in the very officious relation of their ſpiritual factorſhip (unleſſe Scripture be of no more value then a Legendary proof) are liable to the cenſure, Judgement and Reproof of the ſupream Magiſtrate.

For

For that *Moſes*, out of pious anger, hotly rebuking *Aaron* for making the golden Calfe, was guilty of an over-zealous preſumption, or *Aaron*, by a way of penitential ſubmiſſion, calling him Lord, of too reverend diſſimulation; I muſt profeſſe, *I* am not wicked enough to believe, nor whether *Solomon*, who by his own regal authority, depoſed *Abiathar* the high Prieſt, and ſet *Zadock* in his office, did act beyond the ſphear of his calling.

Have *I* an impudent ſufficiency of prophane Criticiſme to queſtion? *I* am neither ignorant nor incredulous of the powerful priviledges which have been, and ſtill are familiar to Chriſtian Worthies, yet *I* am loth to believe that thoſe men who will not obey as ſubjects for an hour, ſhall reign as Kings on the Earth for a thouſand years, or that they who eſteem it the beſt policy of diſcipline to march in bands (like *Solomons* locuſts) without a Leader, are a fit Army (though their teeth be ſwords, and their jaw-teeth knives) to fight againſt *Gog* and *Magog* for the Monarchy of the world.

I rather think ſuch fool-hardy volunteers that liſt themſelves in the ſervice of the Church, to bring the body into one ranck, without the word of Gods command, are more apt (like *Elies* ſons) to greaſe their mouths with the fat of the peoples offerings, and to lye with their Siſters at the Congregation door, then to ſtand up againſt idolatrous Philiſtines, for the Redemption of Chriſts Ark, or to ſacrifice their lives in defence of the Goſpel.

But as a learned *Engliſh* man once ſaid in caſe of Hiſtory, ſo may *I* in this controverſie, He that followeth truth too cloſe to the heels, may chance to have his teeth daſht out: my preſent purpoſe is rather to vent my own, then to traf-

ſick with other mens opinions; yet this *I* muſt believingly ſay, the Presbyterian ruling, and *I*ndependent preaching, Lay Elders are no more warranted *jure divino*, then Uſurpers are allowed by municipal, or Uſurers by the civill Laws.

And if our Saviour Chriſts expoſtulatory demand, who made me a Judge? be not Argument enough of conviction to the one, and the Apoſtles determinate queſtion, are all prophets? a ſufficient anſwer of ſatisfaction to the other, I ſhall leave them both to content themſelves with that liberty which St. *Paul* gave to the *Corinthians*, if they will be ignorant, let them be ignorant ſtill, and conclude their opinions to ſympathize with the nature of thoſe perverſe kind of devils, which cannot be caſt out but by prayer and faſting.

The Epiſcopal jurisdiction which conſiſteth in a perpetual right of preſidency over the Presbytery, is both to my faith and reaſon the proper ſubject of Church Government, confirmed by *Aarons* ſuperintendency over the *Levites* in time of the Law, and by the Apoſtles eminency above the Diſciples under the Goſpel, whoſe jurisdictive prehemineence was not (like the gift of miraculous power, a ſpiritual monopoly, to be extinguiſhed with their perſons, but a comprehenſive priviledge, entailed on their ſucceſſours to the worlds end.

Their extraordinary perſonal qualifications, ſerved to convert thoſe that were without, but their Prerogative power to govern them who were within the line of profeſt Chriſtianity, the one was given for the birth, the other for the education of Chriſtians, the firſt died with their original ſubjects, becauſe the means ceaſes, when the end is accompliſhed,

pliſhed, but the ſecond lives in a derivative poſterity, becauſe where the end is not determined, the means muſt continue; for although the eſſence of Church Government be *in facto*, yet the exerciſe is ſtill *in fieri*, committed to the hands of ſelect officers, not for a temporary uſe, but a perpetual work of the miniſtry, till we all come in the unity of faith to the perfection of Saints.

Neither is it agreeable to the principles of religious reaſon, that what was heretofore of good, ſhould now be of bad, or no uſe in the Church.

Why ſhould not I believe it an ordinance of Gods approbative will, that, as the Pontifical dignity begun with *Aaron*, continued *de jure* in a ſucceſſive Prieſthood, till Chriſts coming in the fleſh: ſo the Prelatical order founded in the Apoſtles, ſhall remain in an Epiſcopal Generation, till his coming to judgement.

I am ſure an orderly rule to prevent the growth of contentious ſpirits, is fit for Chriſtians as well as Jews, and the practiſe of diſciplinary juriſdiction as needfull in this age, as in the primitive time, mongrel iſſues both of ſchiſmatique and heretical Sects, being now as much ſwarming in *England*, as graſſehoppers once were in *Egypt*, or broods of monſters are in *Africa*.

Neither do I build this faith more upon the foundation of politique then Theological inductions; for granting (which is an unqueſtionable doctrine) that the Apoſtles received their degree of authoritative ſuperiority above the Diſciples, not as extraordinarily gifted perſons (becauſe ſome of the Diſciples wrought miracles as well as they) but as miniſterial officers of the Church, it muſt neceſſarily follow that the ſame kind of ſupereminent power doth rightfully

belong to all their ſucceſſours, for reduplicative propoſitions are of a univerſal conſequence, according to the noted maxime in the Schools, a *quatenus ad de omni valet conſequentia.*

And whereas it is objected, that Biſhops being planted in their office by mans authority, cannot in truth be called the Apoſtles ſucceſſours, who were immediately commiſſionated by our Saviour Chriſt, without intervention of humane means.

Therefore our Argument muſt needs lapſe into the ſcandal of a falſe progreſſion *ab Hypotheſi ad Theſin*, I know not what better Rejoynder I ſhall make to ſuch a frivolous cavil, then what a ſound father replyed to a corrupt Interpreter of Scripture, *nemo ita intelligit, niſi qui non intelligit*, no man underſtands that to be a good reaſon, but he that underſtands none; for if lawfull ſucceſſion in the matter of an office muſt neceſſarily depend on the manner of inſtitution, then the Rulers of Iſrael may not be truly ſaid to have ſucceeded *Moſes* in their magiſterial callings.

Indeed the Apoſtles immediate miſſion from Chriſt (whence they had their Title) doth ſeem to enter a caveat *in foro Eccleſiæ*, againſt the claim of any other to the ſame name, but not to the Executorſhip of the ſame office, as it was tranſmittible to poſterity.

Next to thoſe everlaſting Church-monuments the Apoſtles, we have the preſidential acts of *Timothy* and *Titus*, to make good the right of Epiſcopal ſupremacy, whoſe power of ordination, and prerogative of cenſuring the offending Elders, doth convincingly argue their fixed majority above the Presbyterie, for *par in parem non habet poteſtatem*, to be active in exerciſing, and paſſive in ſubmitting to a power,

are

are distinct Acts, which must needs beget an unequal respect in the Subjects, neither can the force of the maxime be defeated by that small repulse of a great Rabbi in the schoole of Church Levellers, that one neighbour may compel another to give him satisfaction for wrongs offered, *ergo hoc aliquid nihil est*, which conceit is much like in feature to that ridiculous conceit of *Æsops* fly on the cart, who thought himself authour of the vapouring dust, which was raised by the violent motion of the wheels, who knows not but by execution of the magistrates power, a Steward may be enabled to take away the goods of his Lord, and a base hangman the life of a noble thief, which are their superiours, yet neither of them have any authority of jurisdiction in themselves (which is the state of the question in hand) over their equals; nor is the subjection of one Prophet to another, an homage only of moral compliance, which barely consisteth in a mutual submission of judgements to the rule of better advice, as the Disciples of *Smectymnuus* do fondly imagine, because the word ἀποτάσσεται, which the Apostle useth 1 *Cor.* 14. 32. is not only by right of Etymology and consent of prophane Writers, an absolute sign of personall subordination, but likewise by the same Apostle repeated to expresse the subjection of people to their supream Governours, *Rom.* 13. 1. and by St. *Peter* of servants to their masters, 1 *Pet.* 2. 18. whose duty (as *I* take it) standeth not in an indifferency of complemental officiousnesse, but in the necessity of real obedience.

The common exception against the instance of *Timothy* and *Titus*, as being Evangelists, and consequently neither Bishops themselves, nor fit patterns whereby others may be formed into that office, hath been so abundantly exploded,

that

that the finer ſort of Presbyterian Advocates are aſhamed to own ſuch a courſe plea.

But that which grates them all to the quick, is their ſolitary power of ordination, whence the Biſhop becomes the Presbyters Godfather, which they being neither willing to confeſſe, nor able to deny, would fain put off with the old ſhift of an extraordinary priviledge, whereby indeed they affront themſelves, as well as the Biſhops, and directly advance the opinion of thoſe giddy fanaticks, who maintain ordination of miniſters to have no foundation in the word of God.

It cannot be denied but all inferiour Miniſters are lawfull copartners with their ſuperiours in the Elementary commiſſion, goe and teach, but that an equal intereſt in the authority of ſome ſpecial adminiſtrations ſhould create the inmate neighbourhood of a Synonymous complexion betwixt them, (as if a Biſhop were but the counterpene of a Presbyter) would be no leſſe then a demonſtration of ſingular ignorance to grant.

And what though the Primates of Chriſtianity (who were both the materials and builders of the Church) did act the part of ordinary labourers in Gods vineyard, and were content to live in their ſpiritual calling by a promiſcuous contribution of titular characters; yet the example of their firſt general underſtanding was no bar, but an overture (witneſſe the hiſtory of their own Acts) to an after diſcrimination of particular offices.

Therefore how a perpetual parity (notwithſtanding the Apoſtolical inſtitution of degrees) ſhould be the neceſſary ſucceſſour of a temporary enterfare in the miniſtry, ſeems an Apocryphal riddle, as far out of the ken of my apprehen-

ſion,

ſion, as the hypocriſie of a ſtratagem is from a childs diſcovery.

Neither can I be ſatisfied why the argument of a nominal community ſhould prevail more with my underſtanding to profeſſe Biſhops and Presbyters but one in office, then to deny Apoſtles and Diſciples (having the ſame familiarity of appellation) to be divers; for if the medium be of pure neceſſity, Apoſtles and Diſciples muſt be one in office, as well as Biſhops and Presbyters, if it be not, Biſhops and Presbyters may be diverſe, as well as Apoſtles and Diſciples: and if one officer could ſubſiſt with variety of names, why might variety of officers with one name; why not a Biſhop and Presbyter with the common name of Elder, as well as an Apoſtle, with the diſtinct name of Presbyter and Deacon.

To clear this point more fully from the miſt of doubtfull Expoſitions, and to cut the throat of that thread-bare evaſion, *Privilegia perſonalia non trahuntur in exemplum.*

St. *John* doth *digito demonſtrare*, directly delineate the ſubſtance of Epiſcopal authority, for the Angels of the *Aſian* Churches, were neither *Apoſtles* nor Evangeliſts, (all of them being dead when he wrote thoſe Epiſtles) and yet they were reared in a degree (if not an order) of dignity above the Presbytery within their ſeveral precincts, as appears by the peculiar and definite application of his ſtile, where the article τὸν prefixt to the ſubſtantive, to the *Angel*, and doth not only denote a determinate *individuum*, but an eminent perſon, which is a ſufficient confutation of that beggerly ſhift, which ſuppoſeth a collective ſenſe of the words, equally including the whole Presbytery, whereas both the direction and charge of the Epiſtles do notably re-

ſtrain the ſummary intention of the *Apoſtles* expreſſion, in a diſtributive interpretation to the ſingular Biſhops of thoſe Churches, for as it is a blaſphemous imagination to conceive the holy Ghoſt ſpeaking more then he intends: ſo it is an unwarrantable preſumption to ſuppoſe him intending more then he ſpeaks.

Gods written Word is the exact copy of his will, and full number of our faith, which may not be divided by ſubſtraction, nor multiplyed by addition.

Shall we practiſe leſſe in our lives, when he commands more in his laws, or when he writes one in the right line of his Word, ſhall we tranſcribe many by a crooked Parenthesis of an interlineary gloſſe? What is this, but either to undermine the divine foundation by atheiſtical detraction, or overlay it by *Antichriſtian* ſuperſtition:

What rule have we either in Logick or Divinity (without a conſequent collection of circumſtances from the Text) to give a plural conſtruction to a word of ſingular termination, or what conſtraint of Rhetorick can we pretend to fly from the congruity of Grammatical concordance, to the irregular ſupport of a ſoleciſtical Synechdoche? For my part, as I think it a neceſſary duty to obſerve that directory caution, which I have learned in the primordial Rudiments of Religion, never to depart from the literal ſenſe, as long as it agreeth with the analogy of faith, and contexture of Scripture: ſo I cannot be perſwaded (much leſſe convinced in conſcience) to believe, that the holy *Apoſtle* writing though of inf.llible things) to failing perſons, ſhould wrap up his purpoſe in an implicite term, ſince the connexion but of one letter (the iſſue of an inſtant pains) would have plainly unfolded the ſcope of the matter, and explicitely e-

qual.

quallized his ſpeech to his meaning. The Holy Ghoſt explains the viſion of ſeven Candleſticks by an adequate numeration of ſeven Churches, and the myſterious figure of ſo many ſtars by the like quantity of *Angels*, whereby (if according to the verdict of our new Septuagint *Interpreters* we underſtand the whole miniſtry of the Church) we muſt conſequently deſtroy the analogical applications of the truth to the Type; for why the ſame arithmetical proportion ſhould not be maintained betwixt the ſtars and *Angels*, as there is betwixt the Candleſticks and Churches, which by a ſpecial note in the one, and particular nomination of the other) are preciſely limited to the number of ſeven, I find no ground either of reaſon to induce, or Religion to command my belief.

As for the contrapoſition of ſimilitude (whereof the pregnant Presbyters after long travel were delivered) that as a thouſand perſons making up one Church, is repreſented by one Candleſtick, ſo many miniſters making up one Presbytery by one *Angel*.

I conceive it more fit to exerciſe a ſchool-boyes wit, then a Divines judgement; for the word Church being a noun collective, which requireth a multitude of men to conſtitute its eſſential definition, can bear no proportion of ſimilitude with the term *Angel* or miniſter, that is *vox ſejuncta ſignificationis*, and neceſſarily excludeth a plurality of perſons, beſides their falſe *procedendo à concreto ad abſtractum*, which he that is but a blear-ey'd Logitian, may judiciouſly eſpy in many miniſters, making up one Presbytery, which to hold a correſpondency with the whole) ſhould be expreſt: ſo many miniſters making up one Presbyter.

When they have art enough to make this good, I ſhall

beg the honour to be their pupil. Indeed sometimes a singular expression admits of a general construction, as our Saviours speech to St. *Peter*, *Matth.* 16. 19. (though delivered in a solitary phrase) is understood in a comprehensive sense, which is not an imaginary inference of private interpretation, but a real exposition of publick truths confirmed by collation of Scripture; for what is signified by Thee in one place, is expounded by Ye in another, and what is intended by *Tibi dabo* to St. *Peter*, is declared by *Accipite* in the rest of the *Apostles*, but by one *Angel* to understand all the Presbytery, is not only an Heterodox and crosse construction to the literal sense of the Text it self, but an unsutable analysis to the conference of other places, which do evidently appropriate the burthen, as well as the direction of the charge, in an interrupted stile, without variation of number to one person.

Therefore St. *Austins Apology* to his dissenting father, *Dent veniam quidlibet aliud opinantes, ego magis credo tanto Apostolo*, shall be my defence in this case, I shall rather believe the plain language of one *Apostle*, then the figurative comments of a Presbyterian university; who (in imitation of that politick knack of *Julius Cæsar*; *Deposuit nomen Dictaturæ, at vim retinuit*) do in pure zeal put down the name, but in corrupt affection take up the power of a Bishop, and advance it to a higher step of supercilious severity, then ever the Archest Bishop adventured to practise; for I never heard nor read that any of them (since the Popes power was purged out of this land) did claim the pride of an ungracious authority to place the chair of state under the stool of repentance, which the rig'd Presbyterians have most impudently done: besides these convincing testimonies of Scripture,

pture, which to me are as clear as the noon day Sun. The unanimous consent, and universal practise of the Church in all ages, recorded in history Ecclesiastical, (which is a sufficient evidence for matter of fact) are two main supporters to bear up my belief of the Bishops right. For why should not I credit *Eusebius*, who tells me that *Policarpus* was S. *Johns* Angel or Bishop of *Smyrna*, as well as *Beza*, who writes that *Calvin* was President of the *Geneva* Assembly. I confess I do as much pity as condemn the humerous dispositions of our factious Novellists, whose heads are troubled with the *Athenian* itch, *non tam magna quam nova mirari*, and (like unstable Weathercocks) carried away with every new puffe of doctrine, from the centry of their old principles: as *initio non fuit ita*, and *hujusmodi consuetudinem non habemus*, are arguments enough to confute either an inquisitive Pharisee, or a schismatical *Corinthian*, which engageth me to subscribe to the Catholick custome of the Church; rather then consent to the upstart eventilations of private spirits; for although antiquity without truth is but a musty conserve of errour, yet to arrest the tracts of our predecessours upon a bare suspicion of falshood, seems to me an act as much against the law of Christian charity, as Ecclesiastical policy, neither is the customary infirmity of a misperswaded conscience, so dangerous as the peremptory innovation of unadvised brains; for humane frailty may extenuate an ignorant errour, but nothing can excuse a presumptuous sin.

To conclude, although our Bishops are now disseized of their ancient tenure by an ejectment deed of the sword, and (who were heretofore thought worthy, as Reverend fathers of dutiful respect) are now become objects of their childrens scorn; yet the present alienation of their condition,

perſecuted by the herd of popular catchpoles) is too ſoft an argument to turn the edge of my opinion; for in ſuch ſubſtantial caſes, (wherein judgement muſt be uſher to affection) *Cicero*'s paradoxical plea ſhall be my religious reſolution, *licet irrideat ſi quis vult, plus apud me tamen vera ratio valebit quam vulgi opinio*: Sir, as I have freely given you this accouut of my faith, touching the government of the Church, ſo *I* hope you will not think it unworthy either your Chriſtian patience to read, or your learned pains to anſwers the ſame, *I* am not ſo much wedded to my own, but can be in love with better reaſon, which if you pleaſe to afford me, you will engage me, not only to acknowledge my ſelf your conquered enemy in opinion, but likewiſe willing to ſubſcribe your convert friend in affection,

Chriſtianus Philalethes.

ME-

METROMACHIA,

OR, A

POETICAL COMBAT

Betwixt the

AUTHOUR

And the same

MINISTER.

Authour.

IN suckling age, when convert souls were scant,
The Gospel preachers were itinerant,
When Christs chief Lackeys posted day and night
From stage to stage to make a praelyse,
Church Angels then by patent had no lesse
Then the worlds Kingdoms for their Dioceſſe.

But

But when those christian babes, by the sweet bread
Of life, were sprouted to a numerous head,
Then the unerring counsel thought it meet,
To fasten fetters to the Pastors feet.
The first born Bishops took no overplus
Above the bounds of Crete *and* Ephesus,
And shall their younger brethren seek to try
Their fortunes by a strange plurality:
As if a christen'd Curate when he list,
Could rebaptize himself Evangelist.
Oh what a spot doth filthy lucre place
Vpon th' example of a Clergy face,
This is the cause so many fixed stars
Are turn'd malignant Planets *since these wars,*
Who wander from their proper spheares to strike
The vacant sheaf of corn which they best like:
Return blind shepheards, your commission'd power
Is only for to feed, not to devour
The harmlesse sheep, which (when you run astray)
Are to the wily fox and wolf a prey.
Can they prove faithful martyrs at a stake,
Who love the flock but for the fleeces sake?
The Manna of the word can ne're delight,
Nor make a glutton a true Israelite,
Whose brains are quarter'd in his guts, perplext
To be confin'd unto an empty Text.
Such pulpit flatterers are more fit to prate
In markets, then to preach within the gate
Of the Lords Temple, where the golden wedge
Tempts none but Achans *into sacrilege:*

Those

Thoſe Elders by their uſe teach men to try
The Apoſtles Phyſick to young Timothy ;
And for to purge their Diet from complaints ;
They do hold forth the Love-feaſts of the Saints.
But where is he that writes himſelf content,
With the ſame Authors courſer complement
Of food and raiment, that in barren ground
Hath learn'd his thirſty leſſon to abound?
Where is the Prieſt that in a ſmall tith'a place
Can banquet freely on the Herb of Grace?
Or that can frolick with a well pleas'd look
On the lean Index of his Eaſter *book,*
And like the Lent *fed* Baptiſt *glad to call*
A deſart Vicarage his beſt Hoſpital.
Such creatures now are as rare in this Land,
As pilgrime travellers in the Arabian *ſand.*

Miniſter.

SOme froward Children of our Age ſtill cry,
Though they may have both ſuck and lullaby
Enough from their Kind Mother, whoſe full Breaſt
And ſugar'd voice allures them to their reſt:
Yet ſtill they cry, becauſe they Children are,
And froward too, and that makes peace a war:
Fie apiſh, peviſh ſquals, what can no food
Content your palate, but what is not good?
Your blindneſs makes you want that which you have,
And therefore what you want, not that you crave.

The Church when in its ſwadling band it lay,
Had nurſes for its infancy, and they
By their great care did cauſe the tender babe
To ſtretch its limbs from Salem *to* Arabe,
And (being fairly grown near marriage)
She fell under that Romiſh *ſtepdames rage,*
Who did this virgin proſtitute to th' luſt,
Of all her wanton favourites, then muſt
This charmed damſel move, or ſit, or hold,
As that great whore, or her baſe lovers would.
They plaid their pranks, and dia her teachers frame
By their unſcriptur'd model, and thence came
Your lordly Biſhops, prieſts too lordly too,
Which theeviſh Churchmen did the Church undoe,
Yet long they reign'd, yea reign'd untill this day,
Until the lamb his banner did diſplay,
And ſnatcht his ſpouſe off from the lions paws,
Where now he gives to rule by his own laws.
And theſe confine no teacher to one place
Above the reſt, but place him or diſplace,
As work calls for them, here no tithes do draw
The teacher, but his great Commanders law.

Authour.

TIs ſtrange a Lecture man, who undertakes
To teach ſhould be ſo laviſh in miſtakes;
Our froward children by inſtinct do ſay
They meet with wormwood in their milky way,

Drops

Dropt by nurſe foxes, who in wait do ly,
To give them a death ſleeping lullaby.
Can the ſhrill accents of a whining breaſt
Sweeten their ſenſes with a candid reſt!
Whoſe bones are as unpleaſing as the call
Of mourners at an Iriſh *funeral.*
Can doctrine prove good food mixt with the raw
Juice of ſchiſmatical Coloquintida?
What freedom is there in a fettred ſlave?
Or what a calm of peace can children have?
When that the ſtorming fathers do unſtring
Their long hang'd tongues in pulpit skirmiſhing.
I wiſh they wanted what they have, and then
They would not crave to have the ſame agen.
This Clerk doth well diſplay thoſe who did plant
The infant Goſpel Temple, but doth want
A good Church Heralds ſpectacles to ſee
The Alpha of a Biſhops pedegree,
Who is no baſtard, ſtain'd with bloud impure,
Claiming from Rome *his primogeniture,*
But lawful branch of th' Apoſtolick ſtock,
VVho built their houſe upon a laſting rock,
VVhence they by faiths perſpective did deſcry
Myſterious craftsmen of iniquity,
VVho labour'd with an artificial hate,
The ſpirits pureneſſe to ſophiſticate;
Yet did Chriſts ſpouſe the ſtepdame bawd defy
That would make ſale of her virginiy.
Nor did the Romiſh *Church (though in diſguiſe*
From the foundation truth apoſtatize,

Until that Damned Counſel ſpawn'd at Trent,
Had ſplit with Cannons her main Battlement:
What if the Lordly Adjunct were firſt ſet
By Kings, as an enamel'd Epithet,
On plain ſubſtantial Writers, muſt that gloſs
Bankrupt the Text *to a perpetual loſs?*
Biſhops *commiſſions cannot loſe their dates,*
By the acceſs of ſuch Magiſtrates,
No more then an Appendix Garment can
Undo the bulkie Fabrick of a man.
Is't only now the Saints *have learn'd to ſing*
A right tun'd Antheme to their Heavenly King?
Hath he decreed that this new year ſhould be
Proclaim'd the firſt year of their Jubilee?
Then did our Martyr'd Predeceſſors *dwell*
Not in Gods Houſe, *but in the* Gates *of* Hell.
Is it his Law that Churches ſhould be built
After the model of a wandring tilt;
And Churchmen *ſteer their courſe from dale to hill*
By the large compaſſe of their greedy will?
The Apoſtles *then their* Paſtors *wings did clip,*
To fix in Towns *a ſtanding* Elderſhip.
Doth not the Spirit ring an angry peal
Into the Epheſians *Angels ear, whoſe zeal*
Was ſhrunk but in degree of maiden heat
From theſe, where he by calling had his ſeat.
And is it yet the Divine *will and law*
Of liberty, that Paſtors *may withdraw*
Their firſt love from their flocks, ſtill waſting leſſe
Until it vaniſh to a nothingneſſe?

Doth

Doth not the ſpirit mark a hireling by
His careleſs leaving of the Sheep *to die,*
And curſing threaten for ſuch ſinful tricks,
To take the Church *Lights from their candleſticks,*
It is Gods work then, or the Devils play
Which calls on them to move themſelves away?

Miniſter.

CHildren *and* Fools *tell truth, that you diſcover*
Your Parentage, and childiſh rage all over;
And cauſe you get a Leader *that ſeems tall,*
Y are glad and mad to follow ſuch a Saul,
Who feigns to cloath you all in Scarlet, *but*
They will prove Garments of the Romiſh *cut;*
Amongſt the Prophets *he may propheſie,*
That is no Prophet in a Prophets *eye:*
Thus whiſpers Mahomet *through his cloſe* Trunk
Lies to his creatur's, and the Whore *keeps drunk*
With her old Proſtigies, the giddy many,
Which thirſt for Biſhops, Prieſts, *Church forms, or* (any
Corrupted Lees, and that her lies may take,
She makes her Sacred Book *her* Almanack:
You talk of worm wood Pulpit *skirmiſhings*
Of Fetters, Foxes, *and ſuch deadly things:*
But here's your cunning, or your knavery,
You are the Thieves, *yet firſt make hue and cry,*

Yours

Yours are the fleecing Prieſts, *the greedy* Dogs,
The perſecuting Wolves, *the croaking* Frogs,
The Drones, *the* Waſps, *the* Cranes, *the blind* St. (Johns,
The Kill-ſouls, *and the true* Camenions; *And that their Character I truly ſing,*
There needs no proof, but their juſt ſuffering:
But the loſt Biſhop, *and his birth is it,*
Which you ſtretch on the Tenters *of your* Wit;
Which with my ſpectacles the beſt that are,
I ſee from Apoſtolick claim as far
Diſtant as Eaſt *from* Weſt, *which you likewiſe*
Might ſee, had you but Eye-ſalve for your eyes.

Author.

CHildren and Fools may well be Telltroths, when
The greateſt Clerks are not the wiſeſt men:
When men are drunk with lies, the truth muſt be
Bib'd in by Sucklings in a Miſtery.
Whoſe Dove-*like-hearts do pant with zealous rage*
To hear a Rook blaſpheme their Parentage:
Ile not diſpute whether a tall Saul *can,*
Lead better then a wandring Jonathan;
Or which doth beſt ſet forth a Doctors face,
The Linſey-Woolſey, *or the* Scarlet *Grace.*
But what our Prophets of the New Game, but
Have gain'd in Learning, by a ſhuffling put
Of their Book ſeniors *to the whole ſale loſs,*
Both of perſonage Text, and vickrage gloſs:

Or what a ſound noiſd faith doth fill our ears
Blown from their lung impoſtum'd Trumpetters,
Is ſo well noted, that we need not grudge,
To let the whole world be an umpire Iudge,
For when Patch Cobler ſhall in pride tranſlate
His ſtool office to a chair Conſulate,
And ſtretch his will beyond the laſt, to mend
A ſoolwry trodden with a Scripture end,
When ſnipper Taylor ſhall preſume to make
A Chriſtian wedding garment, for whoſe ſake,
He that did our firſt lapſing parents bleſſe
With coverings for their ſinful nakedneſſe,
Hath preordain'd that none ſhould look ſo high,
But thoſe whom he hath ſent to propheſy,
When ſuch pragmatick cutters lay aſide
Their ſheers, that they may with their tongues di-
Gods word into new faſhiond doctrine, how (vide
Can this mad prophet ſay, God ſpeed the plow.
His chain of ugly names belongs by right,
To an untamed Engliſh Ieſuite,
Who ſcorns to be inclos'd within the line
Of Church-communication diſcipline,
Doth not he ſute the picture of a fool,
Or an exploded Dunce in Logick ſchool:
VVho makes his proof by a diſfigur'd throng
Of words, abſurder then the queſtion.
Are Biſhops malefactours, cauſe they have
Been by a powerful hand conveyd to grave,
Or hurled into priſon, muſt they be
Therefore the objects of juſt Infamy?

If

If reaſon ſhould be dreſt ſtill in this guiſe,
Twould be a ſinful Art to ſyllogize,
For what a damn'd concluſion might men preſſe
From the contexture of ſuch premiſes,
By this the Jews *might argue when Chriſt died,*
That he deſerv'd to be ſo crucified.
He that hath learn'd to level in degree,
A Biſhops and a Paſtours pedegree,
May by the ſame invented rule conclude,
The ſtars are all of equal magnitude.
VVell, ſince this Clerks complexion is too hot
To be allaid by my Ink gally pot,
Let him alone, 'tis fruitleſſe to invite
From ſilver ſhrines an Idol Ephraimite,
I ſee ſuch giddy Church tops will turn round
Till they be gigg'd by Biſhops to the ground.

FINIS.